United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

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CONTENTS (continued)

(f) Review of the effectiveness of the arrangements, under Board decision 45 (VII), for the participation of non-governmental organizations in the activities of UNCTAD

Procedural matters (continued):

(c) Adoption of the report on credentials

(d) Establishment of the Working Party of the Trade and Development Board on the UNCTAD programme budget and the medium-term plan

Other business (continued):

(c) Draft resolution entitled "Impact of regional economic groupings of the developed countries on international trade including the trade of developing countries."

The meeting was called to order at ... p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE SIXTH SESSION

1. Mr. ... (Secretary-General of UNCTAD) announced that, after consultations he had decided that, where the Board adjourned yesterday, the Negotiating Conference on the Common Fund would be resumed for a period of 10 working days that is to 17 December 1976. A further round of consultations would be held in the intervening period. He had been encouraged by the positive attitude of delegations during the consultations and he hoped that the climate for international economic co-operation as a whole would be improved by a satisfactory outcome to the Conference.

2. Mr. ... (France), speaking on behalf of the Group B countries, said that they were ready to participate constructively in the Negotiating Conference. Decisions must be taken in particular on the nature and basic elements of the Common Fund if its initiation was to be drawn up before the fifth session of UNCTAD. To achieve that result, effective use must be made, with the assistance of UNCTAD, of the unofficial consultations to be held in the intervening period to solve the difficult outstanding problems.

3. Mr. ... (German Democratic Republic), speaking on behalf of the Group D countries, confirmed that the socialist countries were ready to participate constructively in the renewed negotiating conference.

4. Mr. ... (China), supporting the resumption of the Negotiating Conference preceded by a round of informal consultations, said that results could be achieved only by adhering to the principles of the new international economic order and respecting the reasonable demands of the developing countries for a strong Common Fund as the focal point of the Integrated Programme for Commodities, which China had always supported.

5. Mr. ... (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said it greatly regretted that the positive responses of the different groups to the resumption of the Negotiating Conference betokened an appreciation of his Group's well-established position on the essential elements of the Common Fund. The Group of 77 had called for the suspension of the earlier negotiations because of failure to reach agreement on two basic elements, namely the second window and the Fund's capital structure. However, it was ready to participate in the informal consultations preceding the Conference in a renewed effort to achieve equitable arrangements.

6. The PRESIDENT said he understood that the Board wished to take note of the statements made by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD and the spokesmen for the various groups on the resumption of the Negotiating Conference on the Common Fund.

7. It was so decided.

OTHER PARTICULAR MATTERS IN THE FIELD OF TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (item 6)

(a) EXPORT PROMOTION: REPORT OF THE JOINT ADVISORY GROUP ON THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE UNCTAD/GATT ON ITS ELEVENTH SESSION (TD/B/718 and Add.1 and Corr.1; ITC/AG(XI)/57)

8. Mr. RAIMONDI (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the Chairman of the Joint Advisory Group, reviewed the report on its eleventh session (ITC/AG(XI)/57). The Centre had been encouraged to seek a larger contribution from UNDP and to undertake a strong fund-raising effort. Its proposal to establish three-year rolling programmes with its trust fund donors should make for greater effectiveness. A number of proposed voluntary contributions for 1978 had been announced, and it was hoped that other countries would also become contributors to ITC trust funds.

9. The Centre should provide more market information to facilitate trade among developing countries and should complement the work of trade policy organizations by participating in the follow-up to trade negotiations among such countries. It should also participate in the Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries. The Joint Advisory Group endorsed its Technical Committee's report on the Centre's market development activities and brought to the attention of potential donor countries the desirability of having functional advisers available to respond to requests for assistance from developing countries. ITC should also increase its assistance to the import operations of developing countries, which might significantly improve trade among them.

10. Assistance of all kinds to the least developed countries should continue to receive priority. The Advisory Group endorsed the proposal that the main topic for the next session of its Technical Committee should be technical co-operation with the least developed countries and also adopted that Committee's recommendation to seek untied trust funds for such countries which could be used flexibly.

11. With regard to trade between developing countries and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe, representatives of the latter had supported the proposal for increased contacts between them and the Centre, particularly as part of the global UNCTAD technical assistance programme currently under preparation.

12. The trend to conduct the Centre's training activities in developing countries and to train increasing numbers of the nationals of such countries as instructors had been endorsed.

13. There had been strong support for ITC's contribution to the intergovernmental agreements establishing the International Tea Promotion Association and the International Tropical Timber Bureau, and for the Centre's continued collaboration with the International Institute for Cotton, including a joint transitional programme pending the establishment of the Cotton Development International. ITC's proposal to undertake a comprehensive marketing programme for jute and jute goods had also been approved in view of the fact that two of the five jute-producing countries were least developed countries.

14. The Centre had made co-operative arrangements with a growing number of United Nations and other intergovernmental bodies whose activities had a bearing on trade promotion. It had also received an offer of co-operation from the International Standards Organization.

15. All the recommendations of a firm of management consultants with regard to the re-organization of ITC had been implemented with the exception of those relating to the training service and the proposed programme support unit.

16. The Advisory Group had endorsed the recommendations of the Technical Committee on the functioning of both the Committee and the Group itself. It had clarified the principles governing the composition and membership of the Committee and it had encouraged the Centre to arrange for participation by the least developed countries.

17. Mr. ABHYANKAR (India) said that the International Trade Centre had done commendable work in training, research and strengthening activities designed to foster the export trade of developing countries. His delegation endorsed the valuable suggestions of the Joint Advisory Group, particularly with regard to the further action to be taken by the Centre on jute and tea.

18. The Centre should concentrate not only on trade promotion and related activities but also on industrial co-operation and joint ventures among developing countries. It could thus translate the work on improved access to markets into actual trade flows. There should be a greater bias in the Centre's country programmes towards the procurement of exports, equipment and information from developing countries. His country, which had contributed to the Centre's Trust Fund, hoped that there would be a substantial increase in the Centre's resources, and developed and developing countries alike should contribute to it.

19. Mr. MAGNUSON (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the delegations of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, said that the importance which the Nordic countries attached to trade promotion as a means of augmenting the export earnings of developing countries was demonstrated by the support they gave to ITC. The Joint Advisory Group at its March session had concentrated on ways and means of increasing the Centre's efficiency. The number of present donors had been considered too small to provide the broad funding base necessary for supporting the Centre's expanding technical co-operation programme as adequately as it deserved. The Nordic countries shared that view, and also agreed that programme delivery could be considerably improved by long-term project planning. Such rolling programmes might provide the necessary flexibility to enable the Centre to increase its effort for assisting the least developed countries. The Nordic countries hoped that the Centre was taking determined action in that direction.

20. The general awareness of the importance of trade promotion was one of the reasons for the considerable expansion of the Centre's activities. The Nordic countries were confident that, with its re-organized headquarters, ITC was fully prepared to meet the challenge of the 1980s. What was now required was more decisive bilateral and multilateral support.

21. Mr. RANCHINE (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the USSR supported the recommendation that the Technical Committee should meet before the session of the Joint Advisory Group

22. Turning to the Advisory Group's report he said in reference to the last sentence of paragraph 16 that trade policy questions went beyond the terms of reference of the Centre, which should concentrate on technical assistance activities.

23. His delegation could not agree with the statement in paragraph 51 of the report of the Technical Committee (ITC/AG(XI)/57, Annex III) that the only way in which ITC could provide more assistance in trade between developing and socialist countries would be through voluntary contributions from the latter. The action being taken by the Centre to assist in the development of such trade was not proportionate to the amount of funds contributed by the socialist countries to the Centre's budget.

24. Equitable geographical distribution was a generally recognized principle in the United Nations system. His delegation therefore maintained its objection to the second sentence of appendix II, paragraph 1, to the Technical Committee's report. Finally, it was regrettable that the changes referred to in paragraph 66 (b) of the report of the Joint Advisory Group (ITC/AG(XI)/57) had not been made.

25. Mr. AHMAD (Bangladesh) said that the decision taken by the Joint Advisory Group on the comprehensive programme for market promotion for jute and jute products was of particular importance for his country. The jute-producing countries were among the poorer developing countries and it was essential for them that the comprehensive programme should be undertaken as quickly as possible.

26. Every effort should be made to improve the export promotion infrastructures of the least developed countries. His delegation hoped that the Centre, which had launched some good programmes for the purpose, would do still more in that direction. He also hoped that more would be done to promote the lesser-known products of the developing countries, and that all countries in a position to do so would contribute to ITC's resources, which were at present inadequate.

27. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Board should take note of the report of the Joint Advisory Group (ITC/AG(XI)/57), of the Group's recommendations, and of the statements made by Board members on the subject.

28. It was so agreed.

INSTITUTIONAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELATED MATTERS (agenda item 7) (continued)

(b) ANNOUNCEMENT OF ANY CHANGES IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD AND ELECTION TO MEMBERSHIP OF THE MAIN COMMITTEES (continued)

29. The PRESIDENT said that the Board was at present composed of 117 members. No new application for membership had been received and no member had expressed a desire to withdraw. The Board would now proceed to the election of members of the main Committees.

50. The following member States had informed the Secretary-General of UNCTAD that they wished to participate in forthcoming sessions of main Committees: Committee on Commodities: Liberia and Qatar; Committee on Manufactures: Liberia, Qatar and the Syrian Arab Republic; Committee on Invisibles and Financing related to Trade: Liberia and Qatar; Committee on Shipping: Liberia, Qatar and the Syrian Arab Republic; Committee on the Transfer of Technology: China, Liberia, Madagascar, Qatar and the Syrian Arab Republic; Committee on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries: China, Liberia and Qatar.

51. No other member State had signified its wish to participate in any of the main Committees and no member State had indicated its desire to withdraw. He therefore suggested that the Board should confirm the composition of its main Committees as indicated in document TD/B/700 and annex IV, with the additional names of States he had just read out. The composition of each of the main Committees would be: Committee on Commodities, 95 members; Committee on Manufactures, 89 members; Committee on Invisibles and Financing related to Trade, 94 members; Committee on Shipping, 90 members; Committee on the Transfer of Technology, 86 members; and Committee on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries, 95 members.

52. It was so decided.

(a) DESIGNATION OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL BODIES FOR THE PURPOSES OF RULE 78 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

53. The PRESIDENT invited the Board to consider the requests of the following intergovernmental organizations to be included in the list referred to in rule 78 of the Board's rules of procedure: Industrial Development Centre for Arab States (IDCAS), Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), Association of African Trade Promotion Organizations (AATPO), African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP Group), Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), Arab Organization of Administrative Sciences (AOAS) and Arab Tourism Union (ATU).

54. The requests were approved.

(c) REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ARRANGEMENTS UNDER BOARD DECISION 43 (VII), FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE ACTIVITIES OF UNCTAD

55. The PRESIDENT pointed out that the subject of relations with non-governmental organizations was being considered by the Economic and Social Council in accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/197. The Board might therefore wish merely to take note of the note by the UNCTAD secretariat (TD/B/L.304) and defer its consideration of the arrangements for the participation of non-governmental organizations in the activities of UNCTAD until the Council had concluded its consideration of the subject.

56. It was so agreed.

PROCEDURAL MATTERS (agenda item 1) (continued)

(c) ADOPTION OF THE REPORT ON CREDENTIALS (TD/B/726)

37. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Board should approve the report of the Bureau (TD/B/726).

38. It was so agreed.

(d) ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WORKING PARTY OF THE TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD ON THE UNCTAD PROGRAMME BUDGET AND THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN

39. The PRESIDENT said that he had been informed by the Co-ordinator of Group B of two changes in the composition of the Working Group: Sweden would replace Norway and France would replaced the United Kingdom.

OTHER BUSINESS (agenda item 8) (continued)

(c) DRAFT RESOLUTION ENTITLED "IMPACT OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROUPINGS OF THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE INCLUDING THE TRADE OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES" (TD/L.66 and Corr.1-3)

40. The PRESIDENT suggested that consideration of draft resolution TD/L.66 should be deferred to a later session of the Board in accordance with a request by the sponsors.

41. It was so agreed.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.